

## **FOREST FIRE WARDEN**

The Stow Fire Department responded to 27 Brush Fires and investigations of outdoor smoke calls in the year 2008.

The Town Forest and other conservation lands were patrolled regularly for down trees and limbs that block the fire roads. Brush cutting was also performed where required to keep the roads open for Fire Apparatus.

The open burning season was once again very busy for the Fire Department. 481 burning permits were issued from January 15 until April 30, 2008. Those who wish to burn brush must be sure to come to the Stow Fire Station to obtain a burning permit for the day you wish to burn. You must also call the Fire Department before you begin burning (after 9:00am). The number to call is 897-4537. We allow burning between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm with permission from the Fire Department depending on staffing and weather conditions. This allows us to have the appropriate personnel available in case your fire gets out of control.

I would like to thank the State Forest Fire Division and the Sudbury Fire Tower for all their help in locating and extinguishing some of these fires.

Respectively submitted by

Mike McLaughlin  
Forest Warden

## **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE**

Following the 2007 Annual Town Meeting, which voted to support a renovation/addition at Center Elementary School, the previous committee was disbanded and the Elementary School Building Committee was formed under state guidelines and met for the first time in September 2007. As outlined by the selectman, our duties were to:

*Direct and oversee the renovation and addition to the Center School, as recommended by the School Building Task Force and approved by the residents of Stow in May 2007. To include bringing a firm estimate of cost to Town Meeting for approval (expected May 2008). To include hiring design services, contractor and other professionals as required. The Committee shall use the final report of the School Building Task Force as well as the Stow Schools Master Plan in their work. Committee members will need to be versed in the requirements of the Mass. School Building Authority (MSBA) and ensure that the building project meets all the requirements for potential reimbursement.*

Throughout 2008, we have been moving our project forward, working with the MSBA to ensure compliance with all regulations. In a perfect world, we would be ready for this annual town meeting with a proposal for construction costs. But delays and high demands from across the state for the MSBA's attention have thwarted our best efforts.

In the spring of 2008, we were assigned to Regionalization Assessment, as the MSBA wanted to ensure that Maynard's needs could not be met simultaneous to meeting Stow's needs. We presented a

compelling case to the MSBA in March, explaining both our regional school district and its agreement as well as the deliberate process our town has gone through to get to the support we received at the 2007 annual town meeting. The MSBA agreed that a change in regional schools was not an option and moved us to the next stage. We were able to post for and hire an Owner's Project Manager, Construction Monitoring Services Inc (CMS) of Marlboro in November. CMS will now represent us through the hiring of a designer as well as serve as our eyes and ears throughout the construction process. In January, we were finally approved to post for design services and received twelve applications. The choice of designer will be made by the MSBA Design Review Board, which includes three voting representatives of Stow's ESBC. At this time, we anticipate bringing a construction proposal to a special town meeting in Fall 2008.

Throughout this process, we have been working in parallel on some issues that we believe are critical to this project. Fundraising, under the direction of Greta Morgan, has been on our minds since we began. Though it's still early, Greta has researched options for possible sources as well as a structure to accept tax-deductible donations. With her help, the Board of Selectmen approved a plan to set up a fund within the town accounts to accept future donations. Craig Martin was the author of our first grant award for up to \$400,000 from Intel/Organization for the Assabet River to pay for systems to manage stormwater and groundwater recharge. Under the leadership of David Korn, we are researching options to ensure our new school is energy efficient and taking advantage of new technologies, services and funds to help alleviate the costs of such measures.

We encourage residents to keep track of our progress through the town website, where all meetings, minutes and documents are updated regularly.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen S. Sturgis, Co-Chair , Selectman  
Amy Finkel Hastings, Co-Chair; Architect  
Michael Wood, Superintendent  
Stephen Quinn, Planning Board  
Craig Martin, Building Inspector  
Gary Bernklow, Finance Committee

Lynn Colletti, School Committee  
David Korn, Associate Member  
Greta Morgan, Associate Member  
Lisa D'Alessio, Associate Member  
Gregory Irvine, Ex-officio; Principal, Pompo & Center Schools

## **LAND USE TASK FORCE**

The Board of Selectmen established the Land Use Task Force to "conduct a thorough analysis of land in Stow and report back to Town Meeting." Our work includes analysis of current and future land needs, and an analysis of land in town that is: town-owned and unrestricted, or held for conservation. In addition we are developing a process for the town to use for responding effectively to land coming out of Chapter 61 restrictions.

The task force has been working through the year and still is completing its work plan. We expect to be finished to present to the 2009 Annual Town Meeting. We have held one Town Forum and plan to hold another on specific aspects of our work. It is our sincere wish that the efforts of this committee will lead to an improved understanding of land resources, land restrictions, and needs for everyone in the town. As voters in Stow, we all need to understand what the likely and realistic options are when considering future land decisions for various town needs.

We are a research and education body. Our purpose is only to gather information, get the facts straight, and describe the possibilities and liabilities of various options in the future. That said, the Land Use Task Force is comprised of citizens with a variety of perspectives on land use issues and needs in Stow.

Respectively submitted,

Rick Lent, Chairman  
Michael Kopczynski  
Kathy Sferra  
Dorothy Spaulding  
Kathleen Willis  
Jason Robart, Selectmen’s liaison

## **MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

### **Overview of Master Plan Committee**

The Town Charter requires the Master Plan to be updated every five years. In 2000, the Master Plan Committee agreed to undertake an update of the 1996 Master Plan. The Board of Selectmen appoints the committee. It currently includes a representative from the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Board of Health, Finance Committee, Conservation Commission and two members at large.

### **Broad Outline of the Plan**

Our primary concern has been housing because housing policy has a major effect on almost every major issue confronting Stow. We want Stow to be a multigenerational community with a variety of housing options that does not exclude either younger or older populations. We would prefer a Stow where young people can afford to live and start a family and older residents can afford to stay instead of moving away because they can no longer bear the high real estate tax burden on a fixed income.

We want to protect open space in Stow, but we acknowledge that our current zoning rules encourage sprawl. We believe that village development (i.e. zoning changes that would permit smaller lots and provide for mixed use zoning) is suitable for the Lower Village and Gleasondale. Village development and housing partnerships working together can promote a multigenerational community and help mitigate further sprawl.

We cherish the rural flavor of Stow but we recognize that the state’s laws require Stow to accept further growth and development. We feel that it is critical that Stow should find an equitable way to share both the benefits and burdens of development.

### **Current Activities**

The Master Plan Committee seeks input from the citizens of Stow. The committee recently hired the Ciccolo Group to help:

- Improve outreach to the town, including our recent survey
- Improve communication with the town as seen in our recent public hearing
- Review our plan and help bring it into compliance with recent regulations

The update of the plan is really an ongoing process and all interested citizens are encouraged to become informed and educated about Master Plans, what they entail, and their purpose. The meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Rising, Chair, Board of Health  
Stephen Dungan, Board of Selectmen  
Karen Kelleher, At Large  
Charles Kern, Finance Committee

Rebecca Mattison, Conservation Commission  
Roy Miller, At Large  
Kathleen Willis, Planning Board

## MINUTEMAN ADVISORY GROUP ON INTERLOCAL COORDINATION (MAGIC)

The Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) is a group of thirteen communities northwest of Boston that work collaboratively on issues of mutual concern. Begun in 1984 and formalized in 1986, MAGIC currently consists of the following member communities:

Acton	Bolton
Bedford	Boxborough
Carlisle	Littleton
Concord	Maynard
Hudson	Stow
Lexington	Sudbury
Lincoln	

MAGIC began as a group of local communities interested in promoting planning, retaining community characteristics as an attractive place to live & work, and providing a mechanism to communicate, cooperate, and implement mutual goals. For twenty-four years, MAGIC has focused on managing the impacts of rapid growth as they affect transportation, water quality and quantity, wastewater treatment, open space, affordable housing, local planning capacity, and local budgets.

### MAGIC:

- Reviews and provides comments to communities and state agencies on significant projects,
- Assists and advises communities on growth & development policies and actions
- Helps to develop & promote coordinated community and natural resource protection plans, programs, & techniques
- Coordinates & evaluates proposed infrastructure improvements
- Hosts semi-annual meetings with legislators
- Comments on key transportation planning documents

Each community has two representatives, a selectmen or planning board member and a designee of the chief elected official. Both representatives are appointed by official boards - either the Board of Selectmen or the Planning Board. Each community has one vote, as does MAPC, also considered a member. Communities contribute annually to fund expanded services such as the study of Conflicting and Compatible Land Uses, and the Economic Development White Paper.

MAGIC meets every month except August. Meetings are on the 2nd Thursday evening, but these dates are subject to change. The meetings rotate among participating towns. They are open to the public, and local officials and others are welcome.

By linking the core elements of housing, economic development, transportation, infrastructure and open space, MAGIC offers communities a broader view of challenging issues and provides leadership on issues vital to Stow's future. For additional information regarding MAGIC, please contact Christine Wallace, MAGIC Subregional Coordinator, at (617) 451-2770 ext. 2060 or via e-mail at [cwallace@mapc.org](mailto:cwallace@mapc.org), or contact Donna Jacobs, Stow's representative to MAGIC at [donna.jacobs@verizon.net](mailto:donna.jacobs@verizon.net).

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Jacobs, Stow MAGIC Representative

## **STOW ASSABET RIVER RAIL TRAIL COMMITTEE**

The Annual Town Meeting voted to purchase a trail and public access easement on the rest of so-called "Track Road". We expect to pass papers on the parcel soon. This purchase will give the Town a trail link along the Assabet River from Sudbury Road to the Maynard town line, nearly two miles of trail.

The Committee walked with the Martin family on the old railroad route through Honey Pot Hill Orchards. A rail trail on the old roadbed would be too intrusive to orchard operations, according to the orchard owners.

We have looked at alternate ways to connect to the trailhead in Hudson. The Town commissioned a study of a 31 acre parcel for multiple Town uses, including the rail trail. The parcel runs from Sudbury Road to the Assabet River. The study, funded 75% by the state, concluded that the asking price is several times the appraised value to the Town, and that Sudbury Road is currently not suitable for rail trail use. The MBTA has given the former Central Massachusetts Railroad roadbed to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. DCR plans to build that trail, which runs from Hudson through Sudbury, Wayland and Weston. The railroad touched only a tiny corner of Stow at Chestnut Street, but the DCR trail could be used to link to the Assabet River Rail Trail through the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge and the Sudbury State Forest or Bruen Road.

The Committee will continue to look for alternate routes. We welcome your input.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Rising, Chairman  
Scott Arsenault  
Ralph Fuller

Ross Perry  
Kirk Teska  
John Sangermano, Associate

## **SUASCO WATERSHED COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

"SuAsCo" stands for the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers. Any rain falling within the SuAsCo watershed eventually drains into these rivers. The watershed is a 377-square mile area encompassing, partially or wholly, 36 Massachusetts towns. Acton, Carlisle, Framingham, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Northborough, Southborough, **Stow**, and Sudbury are all completely within the watershed. The towns of Ashland, Bedford, Berlin, Billerica, Bolton, Boxborough, Boylston, Chelmsford, Clinton, Concord, Grafton, Harvard, Holliston, Hopkinton, Lincoln, Littleton, Lowell, Natick, Sherborn, Shrewsbury, Tewksbury, Upton, Wayland, Westborough, Westford, and Weston are partially within the SuAsCo Watershed.

Retaining the natural beauty and rural character of the SuAsCo Watershed is a challenge as this is one of the most rapidly growing areas in Massachusetts, and is facing severe resource challenges. Rapid growth and development have made land expensive, which makes open space and habitat protection increasingly more difficult. Many stretches of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers routinely fail their water quality standard for nutrient enrichment and experience both severe flooding and low flow concerns. Water shortages are evidenced as many towns post water bans during the summer. The rivers' capacity to handle nutrients is severely stressed by non-point sources (stormwater) and wastewater treatment plant discharges.

To rise to these challenges, the watershed community formed the SuAsCo Watershed Community Council to bring together the expertise and vantage points of diverse interest groups to collaboratively tackle the critical challenges facing this important watershed region. The SuAsCo Watershed Community Council's mission is to build a community-based alliance that promotes the sustainable economic and environmental well-being of the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord River (SuAsCo) Watershed; in other words to promote blue waters and a green economy.

The SuAsCo Council is comprised of representatives from business and industry; municipal government; environmental organizations; and state, federal and regional agencies. This community-based alliance is a unique non-profit organization whose mission is accomplished through education and collaboration.

In 2006, the Executive Office of Environment Affairs approved the SuAsCo Watershed Action Plan (WAP). The WAP identifies the priority issues in the SuAsCo Watershed and the top actions needed over the next 5 years to address those problems and improve the watershed's environmental health. The Plan is driven by existing municipal reports and research data, as well as by public opinion. The FINAL Watershed Action Plan is available on the Council's website (click the link; PDF file is 10 MB).

The SuAsCo Council sponsors the "Stormwater Community Assistance Program (SWCAP)" which annually provides outreach materials to municipalities to address two of the six minimum control measures under the federally mandated Stormwater Phase II Regulations: Public Education & Outreach and Public Participation & Involvement. The Council has assembled a team of diverse watershed professionals including engineering consultants, municipal and state officials, science teachers, and interested citizens to create the annual SWCAP outreach materials, and tailor them to each town. Simply by practicing the "good housekeeping tips" found on the Stormwater Matters website ([www.stormwatermatters.org](http://www.stormwatermatters.org)), stormwater will be cleaner as it flows into our lakes and rivers. Cleaning up stormwater not only benefits your neighborhood, it also benefits the entire network of water bodies and land that make up our watershed. We all need clean water for drinking, swimming, fishing, boating, and for protecting wildlife.

In December of 2008, the SuAsCo Council held its 10<sup>th</sup> annual River Visions watershed-wide public forum. The 2008 Forum was entitled "Greening the SuAsCo Watershed: LEED, LID and Other Tools for Responding to Climate Change". The forum focused on the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles for constructing resource efficient buildings, Low Impact Development (LID) for managing stormwater, and other sustainable development strategies.

Selectman Kathy Farrell is Stow's representative to the SuAsCo Steering Committee. For more information about the SuAsCo Watershed Community Council, please call Nancy Bryant, Executive Director at 978-461-0735 or via email at [info@suasco.org](mailto:info@suasco.org), or visit the SuAsCo Council's website at [www.suasco.org](http://www.suasco.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Farrell, Selectman and Stow SuAsCo Representative

## **OUR HERITAGE**

### **HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

The Commission celebrated the 325<sup>th</sup> year since Stow's incorporation. In keeping with the occasion, we sponsored blacksmith Dean Rantz, who demonstrated his skill again in front of the Larsen Blacksmith Shop next to Center School during Spring Fest. Members of the Historical Commission's Textile History subcommittee demonstrated spinning and weaving. In August, we awarded a special "Stow 325" certificate to the most historical float in the Lake Boon Boat Parade.

We continued to work on plans for a new inventory of historical sites to replace the now out-dated 1983 inventory. Community Preservation Funds will be requested to help pay for this project. Work continues on determining the fate of the Larsen Blacksmith Shop.

Additional restoration of stone walls at the Lower Village Cemetery was completed by the beginning of the winter season. Community Preservation Act funds as approved by Town Meeting paid for the labor. We were very pleased with the results and are appreciative of the efforts of the Cemetery Committee and